



Literacy Links

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Volume 6, Number 2

Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First

The previous edition of literacy Links dealt with recent research related to [Vocabulary Development](#). This issue will explore critical aspects of vocabulary instruction. Take note of the new section entitled *Home Connections*.

Spotlight on...

Vocabulary Instruction

What does it mean to know a word? How are words learned?

Have you ever wondered what it means to really "know" a word? When you have deep knowledge of a word, your brain has stored critical information about a variety of aspects of the word. In technical terms, your brain has developed a "cognitive storehouse" of information about the word. Knowing a word well means you can:

- readily recognize the meaning and/or multiple meanings of the word;
- connect the word to other words with similar meanings (synonyms) or to words with the opposite meaning (antonyms);
- determine shades of meaning based on the context;
- categorize the word;
- produce examples of the word in context;
- produce various grammatical forms of the word;
- make personal associations with the word;
- hear the sounds within the word; and
- visualize the spelling of the word.

Susan Ebbers (2009), a vocabulary researcher, describes the process of learning new words as one of building bridges, constructing links, and anchoring meaning. She explains that to learn a word well, the brain must bridge the new word to known synonyms, antonyms, roots, and concepts. The brain must also connect the word across a variety of



"Individuals have various types of vocabulary that they use for different purposes."

--Kamil & Hiebert
(2005)





Upcoming Maine Reading First Events

The Maine Reading First Literacy Leaders' Network (LLN) is planned for the 2009-10 school year. Invitations to join these "Dine and Discuss" sessions have been sent out to schools this Fall.

To learn more about the LLN, visit:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/materials.html> or contact:

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contexts and content areas. Finally, the brain must anchor the word meaning into memory using sound (phonology) and spelling (orthography) components. Blachowicz (2009) compares word learning to a dimmer switch on a light....just as the light increases in intensity as the switch is turned up, words are more fully understood as students have increasing encounters with them.

What words should we teach?

Words, words, words....there are so many of them, so how do we know where to begin with instruction? Research by Stahl & Nagy (2005) bears out that there are several types of words on which instruction should focus:

1. Words that are already in the student's oral vocabulary, but which are not recognized in print. These are word that the reader needs to learn to decode or to recognize by sight.
2. Words that are not in the student's oral vocabulary, but which are labels for concepts already familiar to the student. Teachers can use connections students already have to concepts to link or anchor the new words.
3. Words not in the student's oral vocabulary that refer to concepts new to the student. In this case, conceptual understanding will have to be built in order for students to anchor new words.

The amount of instruction required to learn these types of words can be thought of along a continuum. When the meaning of a word or concepts associated with that word are already known, less instructional emphasis will be required to learn word meanings, whereas words that students do not have concepts for will require a larger instructional investment.

Because vocabulary development is continually evolving, or as Ebbers (2009) calls it, a "growth construct", it is important to be selective about which words to teach. Teachers must concentrate on choosing words that maximize learning and transfer to student usage, especially for students who lag behind in their vocabulary development. When selecting vocabulary to teach, we need to consider these questions:

- How useful is the word?
- How does the word relate to other words?
- What does the word bring to the text or the concept?

The Maine Department of Education's *Reading First* initiative is conducting a series of **Free** regional professional development opportunities for **every** Maine elementary school during October and November 2009.

Every Maine elementary school will receive a set of training videos in DVD format that focus on the essential elements of reading. They will also receive a copy of a study guide that supports use of the DVDs, and will receive professional development related to ways in which these resources can be used in their schools. All schools can send two educators to one location; the web-link for registration for this is:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=bwqPUutDYZXXiyyf_2f_2f3G5Q_3d_3d



How should we teach these words?

Michael Coyne, et al. have explored the answer to this question extensively in recent years. They suggest that there is a continuum of instruction that increases in intensity. Students can learn some words **incidentally** through conversation and everyday experiences. Next on the continuum is **embedded** instruction, in which teachers supply simple explanations of a word's meaning in the context of the text, content study, or conversation. This practice is often referred to as "fast mapping" because the instruction is designed to quickly connect the meaning of a new word to words and concepts the student already knows. Finally, the most intense instruction is considered **extended** instruction, during which teachers provide rich and varied experiences with a new word across a variety of texts and contexts. Obviously, the amount of time required for these types of instruction also varies, with extensive instruction taking considerably more time than incidental or embedded instruction. Yet, research demonstrates that the time required for extensive instruction is worth the investment...students develop full knowledge of the words rather than only partial knowledge.

What are some examples of incidental and embedded instruction?

Camille Blachowicz (2009) explains that effective teachers of vocabulary use incidental and embedded methods of instruction to help build students' "word consciousness". She describes several methods for doing this;

- Build environments that expose students to a variety of vocabulary, including the use of anchor charts and word walls, as well as access to a variety of books that focus on words (like dictionaries) and word games.
- Create rich opportunities for word use through conversations and learning situations. Highlight at least one new word every day. Use posters and other visuals to provide additional connections to words.
- Encourage wide reading opportunities to increase students' encounters with new words.
- Read aloud frequently to students from a variety of genres, especially nonfiction. When reading aloud, use "fast mapping" techniques to define key vocabulary, help students understand the words in the context, and connect the word to other words and concepts they already know.

Attention Attention...

Early Language and Literacy Professional Development Training Series

Sponsored by
MELLI and
facilitated by
Jean Sullivan;
This six part series
is educators
opportunity to learn
current research
support practices in
literacy
development from
Birth to age 5.
Contact Becky Dyer
at:
[becky@mainefamily
yliteracy.com](mailto:becky@mainefamilyyliteracy.com) or
207-441-9965 for
registration details
and information.

Fall Sessions are:

October 2nd
November 6th and
December 4th.

What are some examples of extended vocabulary instruction?

A variety of research-based extended vocabulary instruction methods have been developed. While there are variations on most of these, the following list provides a synopsis of many of the most effective techniques:

- ***Extended Text Talk***

In this method, key vocabulary from text is the focus for instruction. Usually, Tier 2 words (Beck, et al) are the type of words selected. A basic routine is used in which the teacher pronounces the word and asks the students to repeat the word so they can map the sounds. The teacher then provides a child-friendly definition, describes how the word is used in the text, provides examples of the word in multiple contexts, and invites students to construct their own examples. At the end of the routine, children say the word again and the teacher may show what the word looks like (orthography). A procedure for extended text talk can be found in the August 2009 edition of *Literacy Links*.

- ***Multiple Meaning Words***

In this technique, a web can be used to show students how words can have multiple meanings. The key word is displayed in the center of the web and the word's multiple meanings are displayed on the spokes of the web. It is important to provide students with child-friendly definitions of each meaning, and to use the word in a sentence. Webs can be displayed as charts for future reference, or students can compile them in their own vocabulary booklets.

- ***Semantic Word Sorts***

To help students build conceptual categories for storing words and to build links or bridges between the categories, word sorts are a useful technique. Word sorts can be closed (the labels for the categories are provided) or open (student create their own categories and labels).

- ***Scaling Attributes***

This instructional routine uses words that have similar meanings along a continuum. This technique works especially well for descriptive words. Select a common word, such as "big". Then create a continuum of descriptive words that are synonyms for big (such as

UPCOMING EVENTS



USM 2009-10 RTI Workshop Series

Sponsored by the
University of Southern
Maine's Professional
Development Center

Sessions begin
September 25, 2009 and
continue through June 4
2010

More information is
available through
www.usm.maine.edu/pdc

large, giant, humungous). Another example of a Scaling Attributes Routine can be found at:

http://www.fcrr.org/assessment/ET/routines/pdf/instRoutines_3VSM.pdf

- ***Concept Maps***

Concept maps consist of a variety of graphic organizers that help students build understanding of word meaning by recording simple definitions, examples and non-examples of the word, synonyms and antonyms, and/or illustrations of the word.

- ***Morphology***

Direct instruction in word structure provides another instructional tool for building vocabulary. Most students do not discover the powerful relationships between spelling and vocabulary on their own (Bear, et al 1996). As students become more sophisticated readers, they need more advanced decoding strategies that focus on word structure (i.e. roots, prefixes, and suffixes). This knowledge provides the students a strategy for segmenting multi-syllabic words into decodable parts for determining the meaning of the word (Henry, 1997). More attention to this component will be the subject of the November 2009 edition of Literacy Links.

Description of Instructional Ideas...

Vocabulary Instructional Routine Making Connections with New Vocabulary

This instructional routine is from the Florida Center for Reading Research. The routine is introduced in Second Grade and extended in Third Grade.

Preparation/Materials: Several words that have been previously taught (e.g. vigorous, neglect, anticipation, luxury), word cards, definition cards, marker or pen.

Task Explanation: "We are going to use our new vocabulary words to make connections between these words and experiences in our lives. The words are: (vigorous, neglect, anticipation, luxury)" (fcrr-2009).



Lester Laminack is coming to MAINE on October 23, 2009!

Sponsored by the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development. Contact Amy Cates, Orono at 581-2438 for registration information.

Teacher Models:

- *Display all word cards---Read words together*
- *Display word and definition cards*
- *Review Student Friendly meanings by matching word card with meaning card*
- *Work with word cards together*

Teacher and Students Practice Task Together:

- *Work with Word cards together*
- *Make an association with each word using association chart:*

©2007 Florida Center for Reading Research www.fcrr.org	word	makes me think of	my reasoning	EMPOWERING TEACHERS

- Write word in word column; write association in middle column; write reason you made the connection in the last column.
- Repeat this process with each word
- Encourage students to consistently use the new vocabulary throughout the school day and at home.

Student Practice: Read the word cards and student friendly meanings aloud.

Details of this routine are available under Third Grade Routines for Vocabulary Instruction at:

http://www.fcrr.org/assessment/ET/routines/pdf/instRoutines_3VMCNV.pdf

Note: It would be helpful to have initially taught the vocabulary words selected for this routine using the format from the Second Grade Vocabulary Instructional Routine: *Make Connections with New Vocabulary* found at:

http://www.fcrr.org/assessment/ET/routines/pdf/instRoutines_2VMCWNV.pdf

**"Word learning
is incremental:
that is, it
proceeds in a
series of
steps."**

--Graves & WattsTaffe
(2002)



**"The years
teach much that
the days never
know."**

-- Emerson

Online Vocabulary Instruction Resources

Word Central

www.wordcentral.com

Maintained by Merriam-Webster, this site has many activities for students and lesson plan ideas for teachers, including an electronic dictionary building tool for students.

Vocabulary University

www.vocabulary.com

This site offers a variety of puzzles and other word activities, including many that focus on root words.

Read-Write-Think

www.readwritethink.org

This site, maintained by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, contains many lesson plans focus on vocabulary development.

Online Graphic Organizers for Vocabulary

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/VocabularyGraphicOrganizers.html>

This site, sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Education, contains numerous online graphic organizers that support vocabulary.

Summary of Professional Texts...

Add this book to your Text Set for *Teaching Vocabulary*

Mindful of Words: Spelling and Vocabulary Explorations 4-8

by Kathy Ganske

"This engaging book provides a wealth of tools to enhance upper-level spelling and vocabulary instruction, and features more than 120 reproducible sorting activities and games. It offers specific suggestions for helping students build mastery of vowel patterns, syllable structure, syllable stress, consonant and vowel alternations, compound words, prefixes, suffixes, and word roots. Also featured are "Did You Know?" sections with absorbing stories about specific words; tips from teachers at different grade levels; discussions of idioms; literature recommendations; and lists of vocabulary related to social studies, science, and math. Teachers can use this book on its own or in conjunction with Ganske's bestselling *Word Journeys*, which presents a comprehensive approach to assessing



"In a successful vocabulary program, words do not appear as part of a classroom exercise and then drop from sight"

--McKeown & Beck
(2004)



and building word knowledge" ---Amazon Reviews.

Mindful of Words: Spelling and Vocabulary Explorations 4-8 (2008) by Kathy Ganske, Ph D (from Solving Problems in the Teaching of Literacy Series) is available from Guilford Press and the ISBN-13: 978-1593858223.

Children's Literature...

The Weighty Word Book

Written by Paul M. Levitt, Elissa S. Guralick, and Douglas A. Burger; Illustrated by Janet Stevens

According to The Gazette (Colorado Springs, Colorado), "[The Weighty Word Book] will appeal to kids who want to sound as smart as they are. It offers a clever, funny way to introduce new words into the vocabulary.... There's one word for every letter of the alphabet - wait until you see what they do with dogmatic, juxtapose and zealot." The Library School journal reports, "Each of these twenty-six short stories takes an elaborate, circuitous path that leads to a 'weighty' one-word punch line.... It's a creative and humorous approach to vocabulary building, and a natural lead in to having students create their own tall tales with multisyllabic conclusions."

The Weighty Word Book (2000/2009) is available from University of New Mexico Press and the ISBN-13 is 978-0826345554.

Weighty Words, Too

Written by Paul M. Levitt, Elissa S. Guralick, and Douglas A. Burger; Illustrated by Kartherine Kartz

Burdensome, catzenjammer, mystify, wonderous, zany.....these are five of the twenty-six words, one for each letter of the alphabet, that appear in *Weighty Words, Too* (Amazon.com). As with the earlier *Weighty Word Book*, the stories, often fanciful, help young readers build their vocabularies.

"Hibernate" tells the tale of Nathaniel, a very energetic Canadian bear, who plays in the snow with the other bears. Soon all the bears tire and want to sleep, with the exception of Nate. "He's hyper," one grizzly bear observes. "If it's winter sleep you want," advises Nathaniel, "then I suggest you do the opposite from me, hyper Nate." So, whenever animals sleep through the winter, think of "hyper Nate," and you will remember the word HIBERNATE.

Weighty Words, Too (2009) is available from University of New Mexico Press and the ISBN-13: 978-0826345585.

"Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have."

--Unknown



Home Connections...

Vocabulary Building Ideas for Parents

New Words: Practical Ideas for Parents

From: <http://adlit.org> By: Texas Education Agency (1996)

"Learning the meanings of new words (vocabulary) helps children to read more complex books and stories and to learn wonderful new things. Children learn new words by being read to and by reading on their own; the more children read, the more words they are likely to know."

Children also learn words through lessons that focus on the meanings of words and how the words are used in written materials. When children write stories, they often use their new words.

Here are some things to try at home:

- *Select many kinds of books, stories, and other printed material to read to your children. Also, help them choose different types of books and stories to read on their own.*
- *Talk with your children about daily events, about events that have happened in the past, and about plans for the future. Every once in a while, use a "hard" word and discuss the meaning of that word.*
- *Have your children keep a list of new words they have learned. Ask them to listen for new words as people talk. Have your children find new words in newspapers, books, catalogs, and magazines. Discuss the meanings of the new words with your children and have them add these words to their list.*
- *Give your children a word that is found in other words (for example, grow is found in growing and growth). Ask them to name other words that are related. You can call this group of words a "word family." Have your children make a book of word families by writing words from the same family on a page and by drawing pictures about the words. Clip or staple together several pages of word families and pictures to form a book.*
- *After talking about a new word and its meaning, ask your children to write their own sentences using the word.*

Adapted from: Beginning Reading Instruction: Practical Ideas for Parents. (1996). Texas Education Agency."

Copied for educational purposes only from: <http://www.adlit.org>.

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SNEAK PREVIEW

Coming soon

IN 2010 Literacy Links—

- ❖ *Strategies for non-fiction comprehension*
- ❖ *Instructional Routines*
- ❖ *More on Morphology*

News from Maine Reading First...

We want your suggestions! As you peruse the monthly editions of *Literacy Links*, you might have topic ideas for the spotlight, instructional strategy, children's literature, professional text, or web site resource sections. We'd love to hear your suggestions. Please email them to: geecon@fairpoint.net.

Check it out...

National Institute for Literacy

<http://www.nifl.gov>

Among services for administrators and Educators, the National Institute for Literacy also provides a wide range of material and information for families. Services include free publications for Parents, Copies of these reader friendly documents can be ordered by downloading or calling [EDPubs](tel:1-800-228-8813) at 1-800-228-8813 (TDD/TTY1-877-576-7734), emailing edpubs@inet.ed.gov, or faxing 1-301-470-1244.

All About Adolescent Literacy

Resources for Parents and Educators of kids in Grades 4-12

<http://www.adlit.org>

AdLit.org is a sister website to **Reading Rockets**. It is a national multimedia project offering information and resources to the parents and educators of struggling adolescent readers and writers. **AdLit.org** is an educational initiative of [WETA](http://www.weta.org), the flagship public television and radio station in the nation's capital, and is funded by [Carnegie Corporation of New York](http://www.carnegie.org) and by the Ann B. and Thomas L. Friedman Family Foundation.

Newsletter Archives

Earlier editions of *Literacy Links* available on the Maine Reading First website at <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

Edition	Spotlight Topic
March, 2005	Maine Reading First
April, 2005	Maine Reading First Course
May, 2005	Reading Fluency



June, 2005	Vocabulary
September, 2005	Phonemic Awareness
October, 2005	Phonics
November, 2005	Comprehension
December, 2005/January, 2006	DIBELS
February, 2006	Literacy Centers
March, 2006	Interactive Read Aloud
April, 2006	Nonfiction
May, 2006	Word Walls
June, 2006	Classroom Design
September, 2006	Shared Reading
October, 2006	Automaticity
November, 2006	Using Assessment to Guide Instruction
December, 2006	Deepening Comprehension
January, 2007	Selecting Quality Children's Books (part 1)
February, 2007	Selecting Quality Children's Books (part 2)
March, 2007	Making Instruction Explicit
April, 2007	Motivation and Engagement
May-June 2007	Grouping for Instruction
September 2007	Making Instruction Systematic
October, 2007	Pacing Instruction
November, 2007	Managed Independent Practice
December, 2007	A Deeper Look at Phonemic Awareness
January, 2008	Phonics at the K-2 Grade Span
February, 2008	Phonics and Word Work Grades 3-5
March, 2008	Vocabulary Revisited
April, 2008	A Deeper Look at Vocabulary Instruction
May-June 2008	Fluency Revisited
August 2008	Fluency Assessment
September-October 2008	The Revised Maine <i>Learning Results</i> English Language Arts Standards
November 2008	Comprehending Comprehension
December 2008	Comprehension Strategies
January 2009	Response to Intervention (RTI)
February 2009	Multiple Tiers of Intervention
March 2009	Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring for RTI
April 2009	Collaborative Problem-Solving for RTI
May-June 2009	Purposeful Text Selection
August 2009	Vocabulary Development



For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov

Click here to view the Maine Reading First website
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

The professional development opportunities and materials are listed in *Literacy Links* for informational purposes only and are not necessarily endorsed by the Maine Department of Education's Maine Reading First Initiative.